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Letter dated 15 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour of writing to you in your capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October 2007 and would like to request your kind assistance in circulating as a document of the Security Council the present letter and the information provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia on the detention of members of a subversive group on the territory of Georgia on 20 September 2007 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-54176 (E) 171007

Annex to the letter dated 15 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Information on the detention of members of a subversive group

According to intelligence received by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia on 17 September 2007, an identified group of about 10 armed people was seen near the new road to Upper Abkhazia, which is currently under construction.

The security of this new road to Upper Abkhazia is of huge strategic importance for Georgia. Moreover, this territory lies just below the air corridors connecting Upper Abkhazia with the rest of Georgia.

Based on the above-mentioned information, and taking into account the fact that the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, was going to personally inspect the building of the new road very soon, the Counter-Terrorist Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, together with the special task units of the Ministry, devised a plan to neutralize this armed group.

Chronology of events:

1. On 19 September at 6.35, a special task unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs comprising approximately 80 members moved from the village of Idliani (Mestia district, Svaneti) towards the administrative border of Abkhazia. Simultaneously, another special unit went to block the area where the armed group was supposedly moving.

2. At around 18.30, members of the special task unit encamped 10 to 12 kilometres from the village of Idliani, where they spent the night.

3. On 20 September at 7.30, the unit moved towards the administrative border in the gorge of the River Larakvakva, where the armed group was supposedly hiding, and reached it at 9.45 at the edge of a field in a forest, where the unit split up into two teams. The first team went around the field from the northern side and the other approached it from the south.

4. The first team noticed three armed soldiers in the forest and captured them without incident or shooting. According to the information obtained as a result of interrogating the prisoners, seven more members of their reconnaissance group were in the area.

5. In order to clear the territory and warn the second team, the first team opened fire. At the sound of shooting, the second team approached the area from the south. By that time, members of the reconnaissance group had taken positions facing the first team and did not notice the second team approaching from behind. As the second team told the fighters to drop their weapons, they started to shoot using assault rifles and grenade launchers.

6. As a result of the exchange of fire, two members of the reconnaissance group were killed: Igor Muzavatkin (a vice-colonel in the Russian armed forces and a former member of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces), who, after being transferred to the reserve, served on a contractual basis

in the border troops division of the Abkhazian separatist government's security service; and Artur Zorin (a major in the Russian armed forces and also a former member of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces). In addition, the following members of the subversive group were arrested: Irakli Khorava, Roland Chagava, Koba Cherqezia, Suren Dilinian, Zurab Muradian, Mukhadin Kichev, Jambul Ovanesian. It is important to note that only those members of the reconnaissance group who had put up armed resistance were killed.

7. According to the testimony of those arrested, they were serving in the so-called border troops division of the Abkhazian security service and on 14 September were mobilized in the city of Sokhumi, at the military base in the "Maiak" settlement. Afterwards they were transported by military vehicle to the "5th mining area" in the Tkvarcheli district. They were ordered to reconnoitre various sites in the Kodori gorge as well as the condition of the new road in order to prepare for acts of sabotage on that road in future. They were also told to choose favourable positions for mobile anti-aircraft equipment along the air corridor connecting Upper Abkhazia with the rest of Georgia. An important detail is the fact that, before sending them on this mission, commanders at the military base in Sokhumi had taken away their identify cards. The commanders of the reconnaissance-subversive group were the Russian instructors Igor Muzavatkin and Artur Zorin: the other members of the group were in good physical condition. Before the shooting incident on 20 September, the group had been conducting intelligence activities for four days, paying special attention to the construction of the new road to Upper Abkhazia.

The separatist reconnaissance-subversive group was armed with:

8 AK-74 Kalashnikov-type assault rifles with installed grenade launchers

1 Kalashnikov-type machine gun

5 grenade launchers, the so-called "Mukhas"

15 hand grenades of different types

On 22 September 2007, the members of the subversive group Irakli Khorava, Roland Chagava, Koba Cherqezia, Suren Dilinian, Zurab Muradian, Mukhadin Kichev and Jambul Ovanesian were charged under the Georgian criminal code with illegally purchasing, storing and bearing firearms and ammunition, as well as with membership in an illegal armed group and a premeditated attempt to murder a number of people. At present, they are serving a two-month term of preliminary detention.